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Breitenbauch, Henrik Ø.

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Trends in Western Defence Planning: Regulatory, Temporal and Functional Dimensions

Dr. Henrik Breitenbauch, Senior Research Fellow
Centre for Military Studies



Background: Evolution of Defence Planning

Classic Cold War defence planning paradigm was:

- Based on fixed geopolitical conditions; main/only dynamic variable: technological change; concerned with force planning (platform oriented); about deterrence, conventional and nuclear; linear, single/few capability generating scenarios at heart; "lesser included"-logic; on the Alliance level subject to freeriding; on the domestic level subject to industrial, economic interests

Political guidance in NATO's 1991, 1999 and 2010 Strategic Concepts emphasises move from narrow defence to broader security management

- Twenty years later: Defence planning still struggles with incorporating political guidance beyond deterrence and conventional territorial defence
- How to do adjust to calls for defence and security planning (strategic comprehensive approach planning) is politically sensitive (no NATO consensus), and bureaucratically and analytically complex challenge

- Even as political attention/guidance has consistently moved away from core/classical defence planning areas, much less has changed than expected at the level of actual defence planning process (deterrence vs. new (soft) security agenda and (hard) expeditionary capabilities).

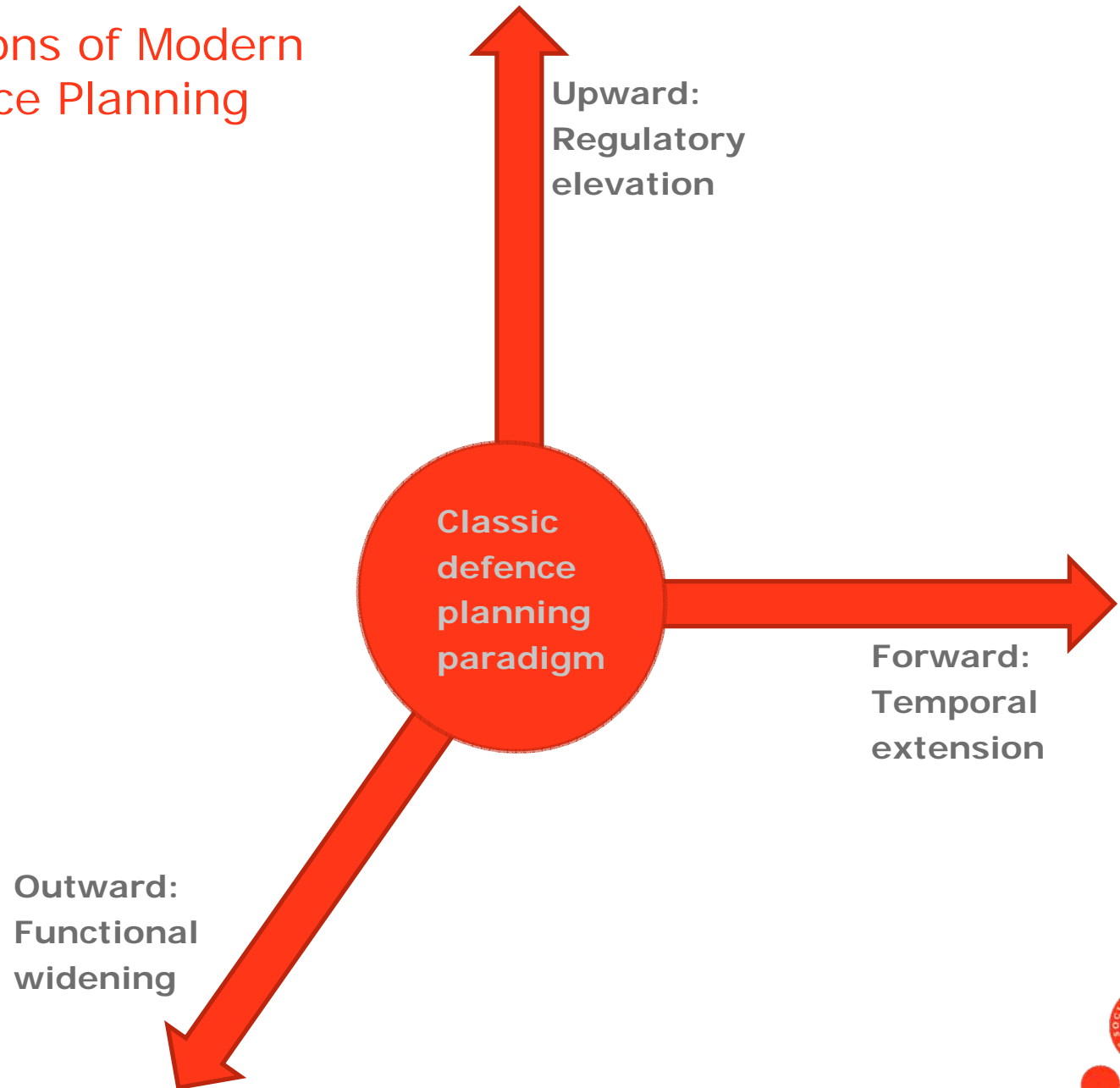
In addition to the important work being done by Stephan de Spiegeleire, one might conceptually discern three major axes along which defence planning change (and the debate about it) is happening:

- Regulatory elevation
- Temporal extension
- Functional widening

The remainder of this brief presents these axes and introduces elements of implications.



Three Dimensions of Modern Western Defence Planning



Upward: Regulatory elevation

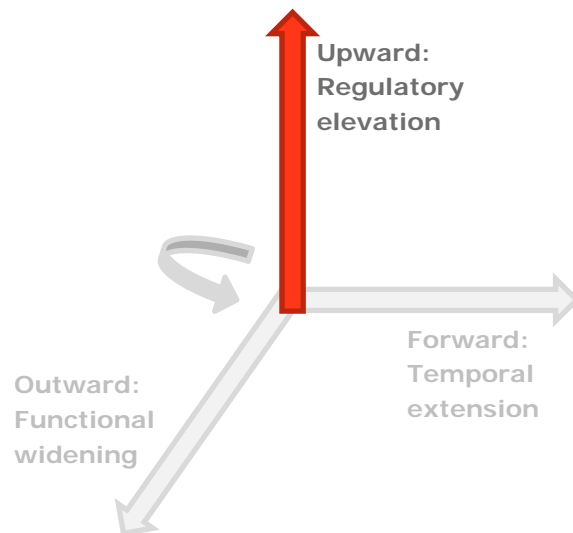
The upward axis deals with regulatory elevation. This dimension contains both a widening and vertical elevation of the portfolio of agents dealing with framing and deciding in defense and security politics with potential repercussions for defence planning and a widened (defence and security) planning agenda. Regulatory arguments/themes include jointness, whole-of-government, joined-up-government. New or strengthened organisational structures include

national security councils (UK, or SGDSN in France). Also present in move from defence white papers to national security strategies.

Comprises a movement of centres of control from military to civilian organisations, and from defence organisations to both departments with wider policy portfolios (external security, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Security Councils, or internal security, Ministries of Interior/Justice) or even higher up the hierarchy, as PM or presidential cabinets.

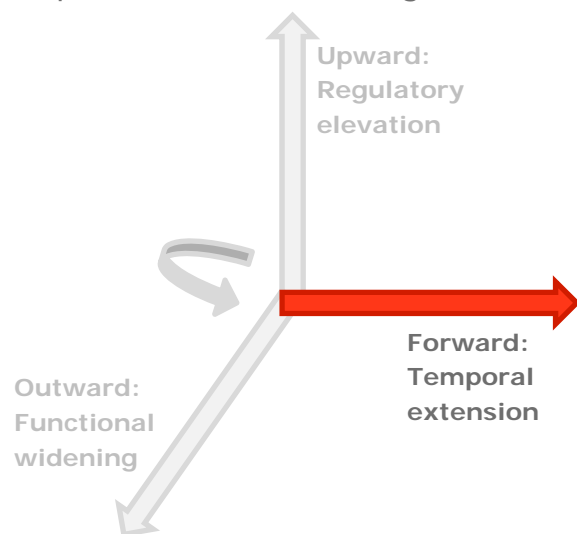
Implications:

- Tradeoffs: does change of institutional locus mean more political attention focus to security than defence; are we shortselling defence for something more vacuous? Does the introduction of national security processes matter to defence planning in practice, impinge on it in positive/negative ways? How integrate the two?
- Stringency: Do budgets indeed move with the change of locus or is it business as usual at the national armaments agencies? Are defence planning processes located with RTO (and NADs) ideal for comprehensive planning concerns? Is increased political control more about operations (glory) than planning and what does that entail for link between defence planning in context of defence and security policies?



Forward: Temporal extension

The forward axis deals with temporal extension. This dimension contains the various attempts to include future elements in defence planning, including multivariable dynamics. Classic defence planning in practice dealt with the future as malleable only through the technology driver in weapons development. Modern defence and security planning is challenged to include more variables, including analysis, anticipation, crisis prevention and management.



The temporal extension includes the development of cross-cutting (comprehensive approach) monitoring analytical capabilities, anticipative contingency planning and political attention to early warning for specific cases, as well as more systematic measures for gauging the future security environment such as the French PP30 as well as the Livre Blanc, the Dutch National Security process and work programme's horizon scans, NATO's Multiple Futures Project, Future Security Environment, Long-Term Capability Requirements Study, the RTO Joint Ops 2030 report, NATO HQ's Emergent Threats Division, etc.

Implications:

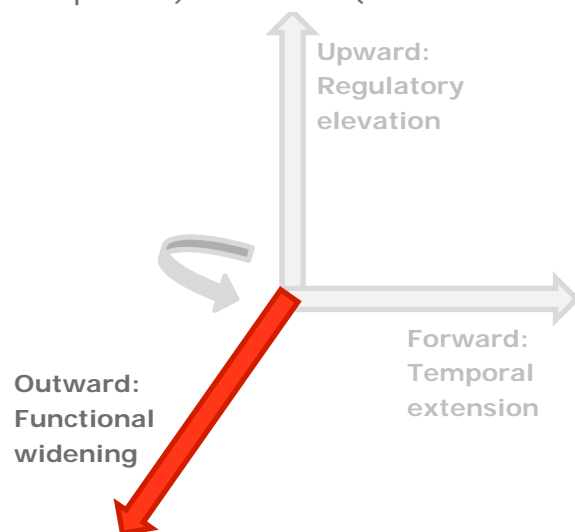
- Political intricacy of making aggregate anticipative efforts exogenous to actual defence planning: too far away and irrelevance looms, too close and vested interests in classical paradigm play out.
- Future perspective exacerbates need for strategic comprehensive planning: e.g. development and defence funds as part of same fragile states policies.
- Analytical challenge of constructing a new post-Minzberg paradigm planning for deep uncertainty (de Spiegeleire) that will be both solid and useful in small and large nations while also serving the Alliance's needs.



Outward: Functional Widening

The outward axis deals with functional widening. Classic defence planning dealt with war preparation, with the military organisation out of its societal and operational context. Modern defence planning increasingly includes this context - and more, hence the move toward defence and security politics and planning. This functional dimension thus comprises the increase in tasks and planning for them.

The shift from preparing solely for (a specific) war with (a more or less)



explicit scenario, to preparing for a multitude of missions including the responsibility of seamless civil-military coordination and transitioning post-decisive operations was emblematically recognized by US DoD Directive 3000.05 (2005), which put stability operations on par with major combat ops in the US context. Development of the Comprehensive Approach agenda has since evolved from tactical (far beyond CIMIC for FP) over operational to strategic and planning considerations, including focus on military organisation's readiness to be plug-in for other GO's, IGO's and NGO's, focusing on developing military as adaptive, learning organisation, including to master the intended move from kinetics to EBAO/PMESII effects, and generally contributing to crisis management.

Implications:

- Operationally and strategically, some fear losing warfighting edge when dealing with non-war-related tasks, including in defence planning. Conversely, if formal defence planning has a hard time becoming attuned to this beyond-war agenda then how to institutionalise defence planning for comprehensive approach in wider government context?



Inward: Decoupled Planning?

Whatever the growth in different directions away from the classical defence agenda in terms of increases in regulatory, temporal and functional scopes it is on the one hand less clear to which extent national and alliance wide defence planning has formally incorporated these elements.

On the other hand, the strategic dilemma of which such a decoupling would be an expression might also point to a certain inflation in political ambitions wrt the active use of military means



versus the fundamental utility of their non-use, i.e. It would point to a rediscovery of the utility of deterrence, with perhaps different consequences for defence planning.

Defence planning as a politically guided, systematic activity in other words need to develop methods for greater accountability with regard to strategic plans and budgeting.

Stephan de Spiegeleire has asked the crucial question of whether these incremental changes together form a mass critical enough to move the locus of defence planning oversight away from NAD's.

Another answer may lie in developing processes of accountability which compare outcomes of different strategic evaluations – bases for defence planning – with actual outcomes over time and place such evaluations higher up in the bureaucratic echelon.

Finally, the growth in agendas beyond preparation for war itself should perhaps create the foundation for a separate set of planning activities to complement defence planning. In NATO parlance, a Security Requirements Review (SRR) in addition to the DRR.

